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Laws Cannot Prevent Strikes, Says Gompers

A. F. of L. President Attacks Provisions of Cummins Bill Making Walk-Outs and Lock-Outs Illegal

Stone Against Measure

Would Bring About Revolt, Glenn E. Plumb Tells Upper House Committee

WASHINGTON, Sept. 23.—Laws will not prevent organized labor from striking, President Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor told the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee at a hearing today on the Cummins bill providing for the return of the railroad to private ownership and operation under Federal supervision.

Mr. Gompers attacked at length the provision of the bill making strikes and lockouts unlawful.

"I say with all candor and with full knowledge of my responsibility that the American workmen will not surrender their right to quit work when conditions become intolerable," Mr. Gompers told the committee.

"The effect of this bill would not prevent strikes. It would simply create lawbreakers. I feel free to say that if a bill of this character is enacted into law I would have no more hesitancy in participating in a just strike than I would have now."

The head of organized labor characterized the Cummins bill as "a bill to disband unions of labor." He said that union labor would never submit to compulsory arbitration as provided for in the bill.

Unconstitutional and Repugnant

"The compulsory arbitration section of this bill," Mr. Gompers told the committee, "is not only unconstitutional but is repugnant to the spirit of the constitution and antagonistic to the spirit of the Republic."

"For three hundred years slavery existed in this country. It led to the Civil War and the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution prohibiting involuntary servitude. To deny American workers their right to dispose of themselves and their ability to work, their disposition to work for their own advantage or at their own peril and disadvantage to refuse to work, is to violate that amendment."

The only difference between a slave and a free man is the right of the free man to dispose of his own work or not to work as he wills it.

There can be no doubt that people are in constant danger by ceasing work nor of the desire for some power to make it impossible for workers to quit their employment. Show me a country where the right of workers to strike is denied and I will show you a country where the scale of progress is less and where freedom cannot obtain."

Compulsory Arbitration Fails

Mr. Gompers declared that compulsory arbitration proved a failure in New Zealand, where it was first required by law thirty years ago, and that it has proved a failure in Canada and in Colorado, where they have a state law prohibiting strikes.

"Are the provisions of this bill a fair and just reward to the working people of America?" Mr. Gompers continued. "The railroad employees were free men when the government with full authority took over the railroads. This bill proposes to turn the roads back, but the men will be handcuffed in the meantime."

The bill, he said, "proposes to make such a combination as is legalized by the Clayton law a conspiracy punishable by fine or imprisonment."

"If I have done my share to prevent unnecessary strikes," Mr. Gompers declared, "The bona fide American labor movement stands against unnecessary strikes and has tried with every means in its power to avoid them and to adjust them if they have to be called."

Stone Attacks Measure

Warren S. Stone, chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, declared that the Cummins bill was the most reactionary railroad bill that has ever been proposed in Congress.

Glenn E. Plumb, author of the Plumb plan for the nationalization of the railroads and their control and operation by the employees on a profit-sharing basis, told the committee that prohibiting strikes would lead to industrial revolution.

"The cause of strikes should be removed," said Mr. Plumb. "This bill goes at the problem wrong end to it."

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Leader of Striking Steel Men

John Fitzpatrick, union organizer and leader, addressing steel workers at a great open air meeting in Chicago.

is not protecting public interests, but private, and violates the constitutional privileges of the men. Two million workers cannot be put in jail."

Mr. Plumb said that he did not believe labor would be justified in calling a general strike to force adoption of the Plumb plan. "That would be rule by the minority," he said.

Wilson Expects Big Labor Parley To 'Father' Others

Hopes That Special Attention Will Be Given to Other Aspects of Industrial Life; Farmers Name Envoys

WASHINGTON, Sept. 23.—President Wilson expects the industrial reorganization conference, to be held here October 6, will widen into others, where special attention will be given to other aspects of the nation's industrial life, Secretary Houston said in a letter sent today to agricultural organizations.

The railroad employees were free men when the government with full authority took over the railroads. This bill proposes to turn the roads back, but the men will be handcuffed in the meantime.

"The President," wrote the Secretary, "would have had a larger representation of farmers if it were not for the fact that the question chiefly to be discussed is that of industrial organization. He expects that this conference will widen into others, where special attention will be given to other aspects of our industrial life, including agriculture, specifically, and I am confident that at such conferences he will have a more generous representation of farmers."

Selection of representatives to the industrial conference by farmers' organizations was announced today by the Department of Labor as follows: C. S. Barrett, Union City, Ga., Farmers' Cooperative Union; J. N. Titterton, Omaha, Wis., American Society of Equity; and F. C. Atkinson, Washington, National Grange.

It was said that the railroads and the lower fresh air.

Professor Todd, just returned to Amherst College from Brazil, has perfected a signaling apparatus for the experiments.

War Not Over, Says Newton

ALBANY, Sept. 23.—Holding that a "state of war" within the intent and meaning of the constitution and laws of the state "now exists," Attorney General Newton has ruled, in an opinion transmitted to Secretary of State Hugo, that the soldier and sailor vote must be taken this fall.

The constitution of the state provides that in time of war the soldier and sailor vote shall be taken by the Secretary of State. The Attorney General based his ruling upon the fact that the state of war will exist until the peace treaties with Germany and Austria are ratified.

Striker Killed By Troopers In Steel Riot

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two persons were shot, it is alleged, by troopers. Strike leaders claim that the presence of the troopers has been responsible for the disorders, but it is asserted by others that the troopers in no instance shot into the crowds until they were fired upon by some of those in the mob.

It is charged by corporation officials that several times during the day persons on the hillside and the roofs of nearby houses fired rifle shots into the plant of the American Steel and Wire Company.

Fatal Riot at Buffalo

BUFFALO, Sept. 23.—One man was shot dead, another fatally injured and three other persons were taken to the hospital, when Lackawanna Steel Company private policemen this evening fired on 3,000 workers who had gathered in front of gate No. 3 of the plant.

The dead man is Casimir Mazurek, twenty-four years old. Shot through the head, he died in an ambulance on the way to the Moses Taylor Hospital. Mazurek was a striker. He had been working at the steel plant for about two months since his return from France, where he served throughout the war with the 2d Division.

Maciej Buckowski, another striker, was shot through the right temple, and surgeons at the hospital to-night despaired of saving his life.

Of the other injured, two are strikers and one is a three-year-old boy. They are slightly wounded.

Governor Smith has been asked to send state troopers to assist in preserving order. In response word came to-night that twenty-five men of Troop B are on their way to the Lackawanna plant, and that another detachment, which has been held in readiness near by will start for the scene of the trouble immediately.

Guards Clash With Crowd

The riot which had the fatal result was the second one of the afternoon. About 5:20 o'clock steel plant guards clashed with the crowd at Gate No. 4. In this disturbance several shots were fired by the guards, but no one was hit.

The principal disturbance began at 5:50 o'clock, when plant guards opened the gates to let out some workers who had remained in the plant, although operations had been suspended earlier in the day. As two of the workers came out of the gate there was a shower of stones and bricks from the crowd.

Immediately eight of the plant policemen advanced to the center of the street, twenty-five feet away from the edge of the crowd, and began firing their 12-gauge shotguns. Other plant policemen inside the fence joined in the shooting, and witnesses said that about fifty shots were fired.

Crowd Breaks Up in Panic

While the shooting was in progress, Chief Gilson and members of the Lackawanna City police were in the thick of the crowd, trying to restore order. Their frantic signals to cease firing were disregarded by the plant guards, Chief Gilson said to-night, and it was not until the crowd, which included many women and children, broke up in a panic that the firing stopped.

The strikers are in an ugly mood to-night. Three have been arrested on charges of inciting to riot. It is alleged that they counseled an attack on the plant guards. Three other men were found near gate No. 3 to-night carrying shotguns wrapped in paper. They were released after they had produced hunting licenses and denied any hostile object. Chief Gilson predicted at 9 o'clock that there would be more trouble to-day, a master mechanic was set upon by a crowd and severely beaten. A riot call brought out the police, and two men were arrested charged with rioting.

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BROADWAY AT 34th STREET

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Senate Calls Inquiry to Fix Strike Blame

Continued from page 1

ator Kenyon said the object of the investigation would be to remedy industrial conditions by legislation, if that were possible.

"I am greatly disturbed," said Senator Smith, "at the tendency that seems to be prevalent throughout the country that the Congress of the United States shall be the place where the relations in a great industrial world shall be determined. I think the common sense of the people at large should be tested out to the very last before we begin what in my mind seems to be a tendency toward socialism."

"Does the Senator think the investigation of a great strike that enters into all our industrial relationship is socialism?" asked Senator Kenyon.

Oppose Federal Action

"It is, if we are looking toward legislation that is to regulate all of our industrial affairs," replied Senator Smith. "It seems to me that the causes are now more or less known. They have not been kept secret. The public is well informed as to what are the causes. As to the inside matters, if there are any—and the public, of course, is more or less interested—it seems to me that it is a case where we had better suffer from what we know than to let ourselves be deceived by what we do not know."

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Steel Plants Hold Firm at Crucial Point

(Continued from preceding page)

operate. It is not by choice but necessity. We want to make it clear that this is not a lock-out. It is our own and only alternative. If the men wish to return to work we will resume operations. Unless they return, our mills will have to remain idle."

A new angle in the strike situation developed today when foreign-born workmen in large numbers began to leave the district for Eastern points. Every train leaving for New York and other Eastern cities is said to have carried scores, who are departing with tag and baggage, indicating, it is said, that they are quitting the country.

Detectives Guard Gary in Street

Office Desk of Steel Chairman Is Inclosed; He Declines to Give Views

Elbert H. Gary, chairman of the board of directors of the United States Steel Corporation, was guarded by two detectives yesterday when he appeared at his office, 71 Broadway. The two bodyguards remained with him until he entered his office, where his desk had been enclosed by a new board partition. To newspaper men Mr. Gary's statement again was:

"I have nothing to say."

Some excitement was aroused by a report that Charles M. Schwab, chairman of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, was going to Chicago and probably would not return in time to meet with the employees at a conference scheduled for next Monday. At Mr. Schwab's offices, however, it was stated that he had left in the afternoon to attend a dinner of the American Institute of Mining Engineers, and would return to New York immediately thereafter.

It was asserted by officers of that corporation that no ultimatum had been received from its unionized employees demanding a conference with the chief executives. It was said the company's plants had not yet been affected by the steel strike.

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